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# HANDBOOK OF SMYTH COUNTY VIRGINIA



1907

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# GENERAL RESOURCES *and* ADVANTAGES *of* SMYTH COUNTY

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*In the Most Attractive Section of Appalachian Virginia*



*Compiled by* JOHN P. SHEFFEY, *and Printed by Order of*  

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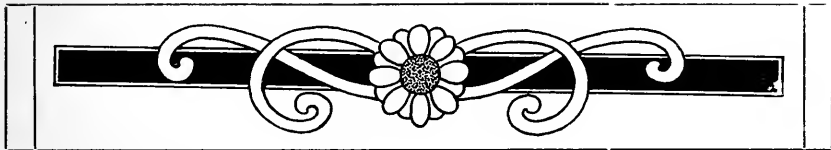
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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IN THE YEAR OF THE JAMESTOWN EXPOSITION, 1907



Smyth County Court-house



## SMYTH COUNTY, VIRGINIA

**S**MYTH COUNTY, situated in that delightful section known as Appalachian Virginia, was formed in 1832 from Washington and Wythe counties. It has a total area of 315,425 acres, with a population of twenty thousand, the number of males and females being about equal and the colored population consisting of less than one-sixteenth of the total number of inhabitants. By the census of 1900, since which time many negroes have left the county, the actual figures were as follows: White males, 8,566; white females, 8,495; negro males, 575; negro females, 595. By the same census the total foreign born population was only sixty, of which number thirty-six were English, nine German, four Irish, six Scotch, and two Welsh. Of the one hundred counties in Virginia, only four show so large a percentage of increase in population during the past fifteen years as Smyth County.

**General  
Statement**

## **General Statement**

The large majority of the people of the county are of pure American stock, descendants of those hardy pioneers who sought their fortunes west of the Blue Ridge and established the character of that civilization whose spirit turned the tide of revolution at King's Mountain and opened up for Anglo-Saxon settlement the great territory formerly embraced within the borders of Western Virginia. The history of these people is coincident with that of the whole Holston region, an extended statement of which does not properly come within the limits of this volume. They have played a creditable part both in the quiet occupations of peace and the more trying scenes of war. Within the bounds of what is now Smyth County was the home, and in the Aspenvale graveyard now rests the body of General William Campbell, who led the patriot forces of this section at King's Mountain, winning what proved to be, perhaps, the decisive battle of the Revolution. At Seven Mile Ford, too, is the handsome estate which has been the home of the Preston family for more than one hundred years. Here was the home of John S. and William C. Preston, celebrated as orators and statesmen, and of many other distinguished men. In Smyth County lived for many years, and here is the burial place of Madame Russell, sister of Patrick Henry.

In the Civil War, though the majority of the people of the county were opposed to the secession movement, after the call for troops was made by the Federal Government, they followed the standard of Virginia, sending to the



Preston Home, Seven Mile Ford

## **General Statement**

Confederate Army eight companies, making a total of nearly nine hundred soldiers, many of whom served through the most trying campaigns of that period. James W. Sheffey, a man of large means and distinguished legal attainments, was the county's representative at the beginning of the war period, taking a leading part in the deliberations of the Convention which framed Virginia's Secession Ordinance.

At the end of the war the people of the county devoted themselves with equal zeal to the building up of their weakened fortunes. Agriculture and stock-growing were then and are now the dependence of the majority of the inhabitants, but the past decade has brought a remarkable increase in manufacturing and industrial interests, which bid fair to make the county the financial and manufacturing center of Southwest Virginia.





## GENERAL ADVANTAGES

Smyth County is about twenty-two miles wide from east to west and twenty-eight miles long from north to south. In conformation to the general character of Appalachian Virginia, which is a mountain country, traversed its whole length by the Appalachian or Alleghany system of mountains, the county consists of long and comparatively narrow valleys, divided by mountain ranges, and opening out in certain portions into the rolling farm lands and fertile river bottoms which are the delight of the agriculturist, and unsurpassed for the production of every grain and vegetable necessary for man. Here the far-famed bluegrass grows spontaneously from the soil, supplying during the greater portion of the year the meat-producing elements for the growing of the finest export cattle in America, as well as for the grazing of horses, sheep, and other domestic animals.

### Topography

The Brushy Mountain, constituting the northern boundary of the county, and separating it from Tazewell, rises to from 4,000 to 4,500 feet above the sea-level, while the Iron Mountain, constituting its southern boundary, and separating it from Grayson County, rises in its White Top and Balsam peaks to the



Home of Maurice Hale, Cedar Springs

magnificent height of 5,648 and 5,720 feet, respectively, marking them as the loftiest in Virginia. The county is conveniently divided into three magisterial districts—the northern, or Rich Valley district; the middle, or Marion district; and the southern, or St. Clair district. These three sub-divisions represent the three great geological or mineral, as well as the three great agricultural belts of the county; three or more separate systems of drainage, and three systems of forestry, differing in character.

The Rich Valley district comprises all that territory lying between the tops of Brushy and Walker's mountains; the Marion district all that territory lying between the tops of Walker's Mountain on the north and Rye Valley Mountain and Chestnut Ridge on the south; and the St. Clair district all that territory lying between Rye Valley Mountain and Chestnut Ridge on the north and the top of Iron Mountain on the south. These three divisions are drained respectively by the North, Middle and South Forks of Holston River, all streams of considerable size, furnishing excellent water power for all sorts of manufacturing enterprises and lending to the landscape in their windings through the uncertain country, with its bordering of mountains, a beauty unrivaled. Bold springs and smaller streams abound on every hand and it is doubtful if in America can be found a more abundantly watered section of country. There is hardly a boundary of one hundred acres in the county which is not well supplied with springs or running streams.

## **Prospect**

The wonderful development of the resources of Appalachian Virginia during the past few years, revealing to some extent the richness of the soil, the wealth of forest and mountain, and the suitability of the country to the increasing needs of civilization, is but an indication of the fulfilment of Commodore Maury's prophecy, that here would be eventually the most prosperous and thickly-settled section of America. The country itself is ideal for habitation—a country of mountains and rivers, its rugged aspect relieved by fertile farm lands and peaceful homes, eminently suited for the nurturing of that high type of civilization which is Virginia's pride. Though its improvement has been rapid, it yet remains in many respects an undiscovered land, offering to the hand of industry abundant fruits for energy expended and to the capitalist a liberal increase on investments.

Smyth County, in the midst of this pleasing country, with all of those characteristics which render the section so attractive, and with undeveloped wealth sufficient for the support of a population more than twenty times the number of its present inhabitants, invites the attention of the homeseeker and investor.



## **Climate**

The Holston water-shed, of which Smyth County forms a part, is one of the three water-sheds of greatest elevation in Virginia, being 2,594 feet above the



Home of T. B. Ward, Chatham Hill

## Climate

sea. The elevation of the county and its relatively clear atmosphere favor insolation. During the day air currents move up the mountain sides and the valleys become filled with warm air. At night these conditions are reversed. Cool, descending currents flow down the mountain sides into the valleys, displacing the warm air and thus reducing the temperature decidedly. This results in considerable differences in the daily range of temperature.

Precipitation is well distributed over the county and is abundant for all agricultural purposes.

The climatic conditions are as follows:

Average temperature for ten years: spring, 53 degrees; summer 71 degrees; autumn, 54 degrees; winter, 33 degrees; annual, 53 degrees. Highest temperature, 97 degrees; lowest temperature, 11 degrees below zero. Number of times in ten years that the lowest temperature has been below zero, 19. Number of times the highest temperature has been above 95 degrees, 13.

Average seasonal precipitation for ten years, per month: spring, 3.83 inches; summer, 4.53 inches; autumn, 2.57 inches; winter, 3.03 inches. Average annual, 41.90 inches. Average number of days yearly with measurable amount of precipitation, 110. Average amount of snowfall each year, 23.3 inches. Greatest snowfall in any one storm covering 24 hours, 13.3 inches. Prevailing direction of the wind, W.

The average date of last frost in the spring is April 28th, while the latest on

record for spring occurred May 30th. In the autumn the earliest frost was recorded on September 12th, and the average date is October 10th.

## Climate

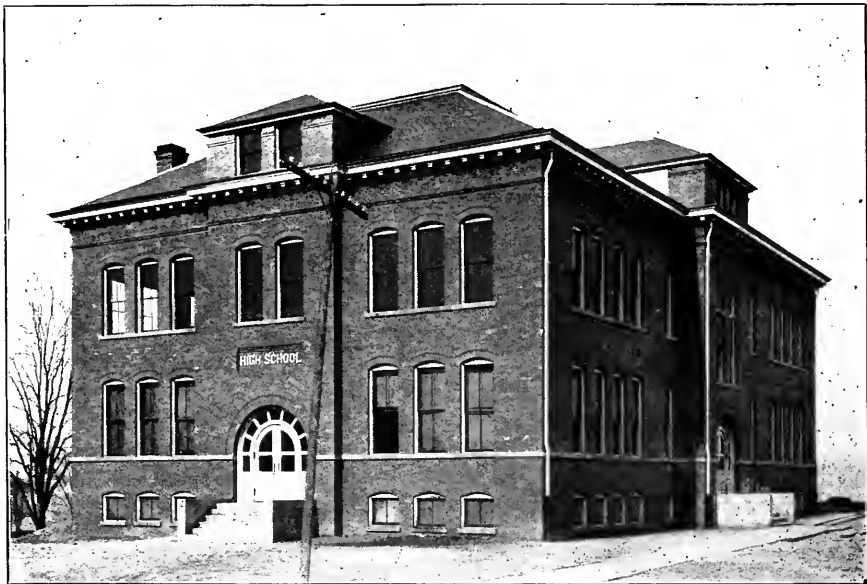
Situated as it is in the heart of the mountain country and far enough south to avoid the severe winters of more northern latitudes, Smyth County is unsurpassed as a place of residence, so far as climatic conditions are concerned. The altitude is such that always during the summer months the days are agreeable and the nights are cool. Rarely during the middle of the day in summer is the atmosphere oppressive for warmth. In winter the thermometer very rarely goes to zero, and if the weather does become very cold, it is usually so for a very short time. The proportion of bright, warm days during the winter months is large, and a good part of the winter weather is suitable for outdoor work.

- It is no exaggeration to say that from the last of March to the early days of December the climate of Southwest Virginia is delightful. Summer visitors are numerous, coming to the mountains to escape the extreme heat of lower and more southern localities.



In educational lines Smyth County is improving rapidly, in line with the educational awakening all over Virginia and the South. There are sixty-one public school buildings in the county, with a total number of eighty-eight teachers. There are twenty-six male teachers in the division and sixty-two female,

## Schools and Churches



Public High School at Marion



which is, perhaps, the ratio prevailing all over the State. During the last few years the average salary paid to teachers has been doubled. Good schools are easy of access to every child in the county, and there are eight excellent high schools, located at convenient points. New and modern school buildings have been erected within the last few years at a cost of nearly seventy thousand dollars. In Marion and Saltville, the two incorporated towns of the county, have been opened for use, during the past year, new and costly high school buildings, equal to the best in the State. In Marion, the county seat, is located also a first-class girls' school, Marion College, which has wielded a wide influence in the educational progress of this section of Virginia. The general attitude of the people of the county is highly favorable to improved educational facilities.

In addition to local school advantages, Smyth County is within easy reach of the leading colleges of the South. Marion, the county seat and practical geographical center of the county, is within a half hour's ride of Emory and Henry College, one of the oldest and most influential colleges for men in the South, while all of the colleges of Virginia to the eastward are within easy reach. Roanoke College and the Virginia Polytechnic Institute are both within the bounds of the section known as Southwest Virginia, while Charlottesville, the seat of the University of Virginia, is reached within eight hours by rail. Washington and Lee University, the Virginia Military Institute, and Hampden-

## **Schools and Churches**

Sidney are within one day's ride. Within less than two hours' ride to the eastward and westward of Marion are high-grade girls' schools, representing the leading religious denominations of the country.

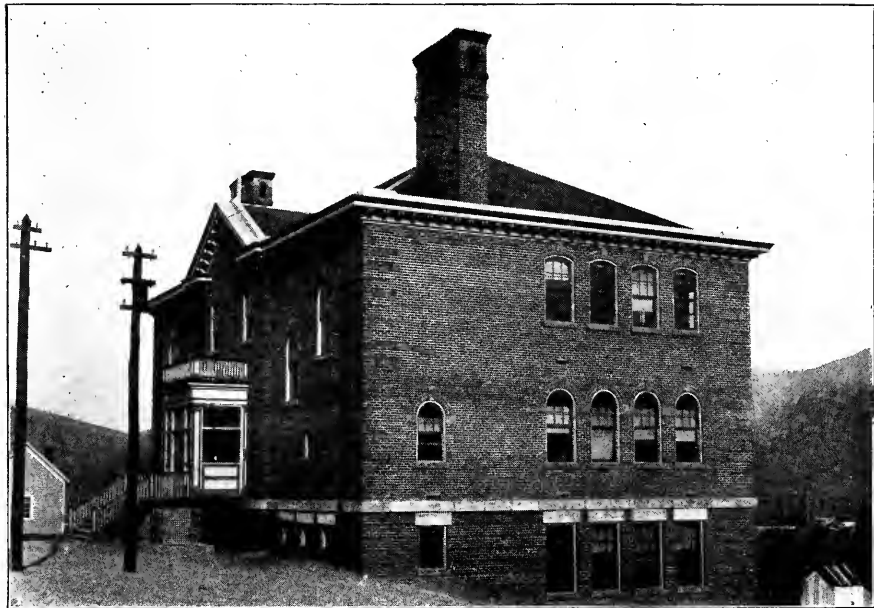
There are about forty churches in the county, representing the leading religious denominations. The moral and religious condition of the people is far above the average. There has been no licensed sale of whiskey in the county for over thirty years. The criminal expenses of the county during the past year were about three hundred dollars, a very low figure for a population of twenty thousand people. During this time there has been only one conviction for a felony, and this was committed by a citizen of another county who was passing through on a freight train. At the present time the county jail is empty and has been so for some time.

There are two newspapers published at the county seat, representing the two great political parties. Mail facilities are such that the leading newspapers of the country are received on the day of publication.



## **Railroads and Turnpikes**

Railroad property has improved in line with growth in other directions, the assessed valuation of such property being as follows: Norfolk & Western, with twenty-two miles of main track and six miles of side track, \$400,380.00;



Public High School at Saltville

## **Railroads and Turnpikes**

Marion & Rye Valley, with seventeen and thirty-five hundredths miles of track, \$105,357.00; and the Virginia Southern, with six miles of track, \$30,000.00.

The Norfolk & Western Railway divides the county practically in half, running east and west through the central valley of the Holston, affording easy connection with the Virginia & Southwestern and Southern systems at Bristol, forty-four miles west, and a convenient passenger and freight route to the markets of the east and north. On the Norfolk & Western, in the central valley, are located the thriving towns of Chilhowie, Seven Mile Ford, Atkins, and Marion, the county seat, while Saltville is reached by a branch road running out from Glade Spring in the edge of Washington County. Three passenger trains each way daily are supplied, including two solid vestibuled trains.

Toward the south from Marion and together with the Virginia Southern Railroad, opening up for successful development the rich mineral and timber lands of the Rye Valley region, and extending from Marion nearly forty miles, into the very heart of the richest body of spruce timber in America, runs the Marion & Rye Valley Railroad. This is a standard gauge road built especially for the development of the mineral and timber interests which it reaches. It passes in an easy grade up the narrow and picturesque valley of Staley's Creek, ascending with sharper grade the mountain which forms the dividing line between the middle and southern valleys of Smyth County. This road exhibits in its construction a considerable degree of engineering skill, the grade having

been located with difficulty, and the descent of the southern side of the mountain necessitating a series of "switchbacks." It passes through a country whose rugged beauty is unsurpassed, perhaps, in America, and whose wealth of mineral and of timber is large. The road crosses the mountain south of Marion around a break in the range, opening up to view the snug valley which forms the southern district of Smyth County, while beyond, as far as the eye can reach are the lofty mountains which form the border of western North Carolina. High over all is the round summit of Balsam Mountain, rising nearly six thousand feet above the sea. Toward the west is the sharper summit of White Top, which is also nearly six thousand feet above sea-level, and from which one may see into the four states of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Kentucky.

The Marion & Rye Valley and Virginia Southern roads, which are practically one system, handle a very large amount of logs and sawed timber, the latter being brought from the large band-mill of the Fairwood Lumber Company in Grayson County and from smaller mills along the roads, while the unsawed logs are brought from the logging camps to the mill of the United States Lumber Company at Marion. In addition, the Marion & Rye Valley brings to the Norfolk & Western for shipment to market a great deal of iron ore, produce, and other freight and express. The county is well supplied with shipping facilities, no point being unduly far from a railroad.

The county has about six hundred miles of turnpike and graded roads.



A Road in the Chilhowie Country

Running east and west through the middle valley is a first-class macadamized road, formerly the old stage route, from which are good roads leading to all parts of the county. The good roads movement which is taking hold in the counties of Southwest Virginia will lead to improvement in the roads of Smyth County.

**Railroads  
and  
Turnpikes**



The total assessed value of all property in Smyth County is \$3,607,261.85, of which \$2,223,166.00 is real estate and \$1,384,095.00 is personal property. The total revenue of the county from realty and personal taxes during the present year amounts to nearly \$54,000.00, of which about \$14,000.00 goes to the State.

**Financial  
Condition**

The average assessed value of the real estate is \$4.87 per acre. While this valuation seems remarkably low, the fact must be taken into consideration that a large part of the county is mountainous and, for the most part, untillable. A considerable portion of the mountain section, however, is well timbered and has increased largely in value since the beginning of the development of the lumber interests in this section. Of the total acreage of the county, Marion district has 110,432 acres, with an average assessed value of \$4.66 per acre; Rich Valley has 108,995 acres, with an average assessed value of \$6.54 per acre; and St. Clair has 96,002 acres with an average assessed value of \$3.43 per acre. Much of the mountain land of the three districts is assessed as low as fifty

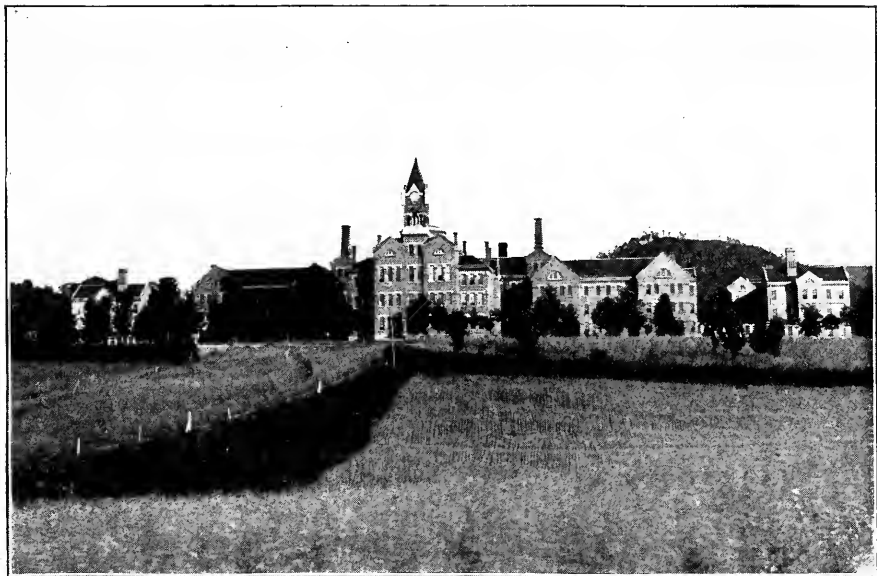
## **Financial Condition**

cents per acre. As is the prevailing system in Virginia, the assessed value of farming lands and personal property is not quite one-third of actual values. Most of the agricultural and grazing land ranges in price from twenty to one hundred dollars per acre, and some of it is regarded as worth more than the latter figure. The total actual value of real estate and personal property is, therefore, in the neighborhood of \$12,000,000.00. The approximate total actual value of manufacturing plants and enterprises is not far from the same amount, if the real estate holdings of such enterprises be included. Of this estimated value, a large part, perhaps nearly one-half, is embraced in the great enterprise of the Mathieson Alkali Works at Saltville, the chief single industrial activity of the county.

The total indebtedness of the county is \$54,000.00. Of this about \$4,000.00 consists of bonds issued at the time of the establishment at Marion of the Southwestern State Hospital. About \$50,000.00 of the total indebtedness was assumed lately for the erection of a new county court-house. These bonds are for thirty years, with the privilege of paying one-fourth in five years, and one-fourth every five years thereafter, or all at the end of twenty years. In all probability all of the bonds will be retired within the twenty years. The total tax rate is one dollar and sixty-one and two-thirds cents on the one hundred dollars, divided as follows:

State taxes for all purposes, thirty-five cents; county tax, fifty cents; road





Southwestern State Hospital, Marion

tax, thirty cents; county school tax, twenty cents; district school tax, ten cents; court-house levy, sixteen and two-thirds cents.



**Banks** By their last published statements the total resources of the four banks of Smyth County are as follows: Bank of Marion, Marion, Virginia, \$299,711.91; Marion National Bank, Marion, Virginia, \$372,171.80; Bank of Saltville, Saltville, Virginia, \$120,330.81; Bank of Chilhowie, Chilhowie, Virginia, \$53,990.61. The individual deposits in these four banks amount to over half a million dollars. The rapid improvement in financial conditions among the people is shown by the growth of these deposits. Four years ago there was only one bank in the county, and its individual deposits at that time rarely exceeded \$200,000.00.



**Fraternal and Benevolent Organizations** Marion, the county seat of Smyth County, is the acknowledged Masonic center of Southwest Virginia, the fraternity being represented here by Lynn Commandery, No. 9, K. T., and Marion Royal Arch Chapter, No. 51. At various points in the county are also representative lodges of other leading fraternal and benevolent organizations, including the Royal Arcanum, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Junior Order of United American Mechanics, Woodmen of America, etc.

Another evidence of the spirit of improvement which characterizes the people of Smyth County is shown in the new court-house recently completed at Marion. The old building, which stood upon a beautiful square in the center of town, was erected in 1832, just after the formation of the county, and had long been out of keeping with the progressive spirit which, especially during recent years, has marked this section of the State. The Board of Supervisors, on their own initiative and under the solicitation of leading citizens of the county, had this old building removed and a new and enlarged building for county and court purposes erected. The building of a new jail also was rendered necessary by the fact that the old jail, which stood upon the rear of the court-house square, had to be removed to make room for the new court-house.

The completed court building has attracted the favorable attention of all visitors to the county seat. The architect has skillfully combined the best features of the Roman style with the practical demands of modern life, and the building, while distinguished for the simplicity of ornamentation which characterizes the special period of architectural development to which it refers, is doubtless the most imposing and conveniently arranged of its class in the State. It is built of Powhatan pepper-and-salt brick and Bedford limestone. The interior wood work is of first quality native quartered oak and Carolina pine and steel ceilings are used throughout except in the auditorium. The building is heated throughout with steam and is fitted for three hundred and eighty-four



Lyon's Gap Stock Farm-Home of H. L. Morgan

electric lights. It is a difficult matter to convince a stranger that both it and the jail were built and practically furnished within the sum of \$60,000.00. For its construction, bonds for \$50,000.00 were issued and will be paid without increase of taxation.

In the southeast corner of the court-house square is a beautiful granite monument to the memory of the soldiers of the Confederacy who went from this county to the war between the states. This monument was erected by the devoted efforts of the Smyth County Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy.

At Marion is located also the Southwestern State Hospital for the Insane, one of the largest public institutions in Virginia. This hospital was established in 1887 by the Virginia Legislature at an original cost of \$200,000.00, since which time large additions have been made, the institution now being maintained at an annual expenditure of about \$70,000.00. There are at present something over five hundred patients. Dr. A. S. Priddy is the Superintendent.

The hospital maintains its own electric light and power plant and has an abundant gravity supply of pure freestone water from a never-failing spring about three miles from Marion. There is a farm in connection with the hospital, from which last year produce to the value of over \$12,000.00 was furnished for use by the patients and employes, including twenty-four thousand nine hundred and fifty-two gallons of milk and nearly eleven thousand dozen eggs. The

## **Public Buildings**

monthly pay-roll of attendants and employes is considerable and is for the most part expended in Smyth County. Here also many of the supplies for the institution are purchased.



## **GENERAL RESOURCES**

## **Agriculture**

The soils of the divisions of the county vary almost as widely as her mineral productions, which will be treated later on. There is a large area of level or river bottom land lying along each of the three rivers, affording alluvial deposits of great depth and fertility. These lands are very productive, being capable of constant cropping without deterioration, whether for wheat, corn, oats, rye, cabbage, roots or grasses. The average yield per acre of all grain crops, under proper cultivation, is equal to that of the best lands in America. The farmer who does not raise from twenty to thirty-five bushels of wheat per acre and between sixty and one hundred bushels of corn does not fail to do so from any lack of productiveness in the soil. While the county is situated in a section of Virginia preëminently adapted for grazing purposes, a large amount of land is under cultivation and the county ranks well up among the grain and vegetable producing counties of the State.

In the fertile river bottoms of the Rich Valley and the Chilhowie country



Preparing to Plant Apple Trees  
Home of D. D. Cole, St. Clair's Bottom

less than one hundred bushels of corn per acre is the exception, the soil and climate being especially adapted to the successful growing of this crop. Wheat also is very successfully grown, the yield on good land rarely being less than twenty bushels per acre. In addition to these two staple crops, large crops of buckwheat, rye and oats are grown. Hay also forms no mean part of the county's agricultural productions, the yield ranging from two to four and one-half tons per acre. The yield of millet, clover, cowpeas, and all provender crops is abundant.

In the Rich Valley, with its more than one hundred square miles of some of the finest lands in Virginia, are found thousands of acres of bluegrass of indigenous growth, the farms here equaling in every respect the far-famed bluegrass lands of Kentucky. Besides the many delightful homesteads owned by happy and contented farmers in this lovely valley, there is located at Saltville the beautiful ten-thousand-acre, bluegrass, stock farm connected with the Mathieson Alkali Works. Here for many years the Palmer and Bowman Company owned the largest herd of registered short-horn cattle in the world. That their herd attained high rank in the short-horn world is attested by the fact that its trade extended not only to the remotest sections of our country, but to this firm belonged the honor of having made the first shipment of short-horns ever made from the United States to the Spanish-American states south of the equator, and also of having exported more cattle to South America than all



other breeders in the United States together. This farm is now under the management of the firm of W. W. George and Sons, who also make a specialty of the breeding and growing of fine cattle, having at present the only herd of pure-bred short-horns in the county.

At Lyon's Gap, in the Rich Valley, is the Lyon's Gap Stock Farm, where Mr. H. L. Morgan is engaged in breeding pure-bred Hereford cattle and making beef-cattle for the export market. The foundation stock for this Hereford herd was bought from the oldest and most prominent breeders in Indiana and Illinois, and, while the herd is not large, they are as good as any that can be found in the United States. These cattle, as are those of all the breeders of this section, are brought to maturity in the most natural way, having the run of a bluegrass pasture during the summer and fed in the open pretty much all winter, never being closely stabled. The young cattle are broke to the halter and are as gentle and docile as could be, but their growth in the open renders them strong, robust and healthy. Cattle from this herd have been sold into North Carolina, Tennessee, Illinois, and other states.

Eight years ago Hereford cattle were practically unknown in Southwest Virginia, and there was not one in Smyth County. Herefords were never seen among the bunches of export cattle. Today the kindly white-faces greet you on every hand. A Rich Valley pasture field looks odd now without a few Hereford steers and they are nearly always the tops of the lot.



Export Cattle—W. W. George & Sons

The two breeders named above are given here merely as indicating the work of the cattle men of Smyth County. Practically all of the extensive farmers of the county are engaged in the production of fine beef cattle for the export markets. Less than one dozen of the farmers of the Rich Valley shipped last year over one hundred thousand dollars' worth of export cattle. The whole of the Rich Valley, as well as parts of the other sections of the county, is noted for fine cattle, horses and sheep.

Cattle for export are usually handled in the following manner: They are bought in the fall as two-year olds, wintered on a limited amount of shock corn, with about all of the roughness they will eat, such as corn fodder, or corn stover, hay and straw. They are fed out on the sod, never closely stabled. The farmer who keeps the fall weights on until the grass comes has done well, though generally a few pounds are added during the winter. They are turned to pasture, a good bluegrass sod, about the middle of April, where without further feeding of grain they are ready for the fall shipments. Southwest Virginia, with the exception of a few counties in West Virginia, is the only section in America from which cattle for export are sent direct from the pasture lands without the use of grain in fattening.

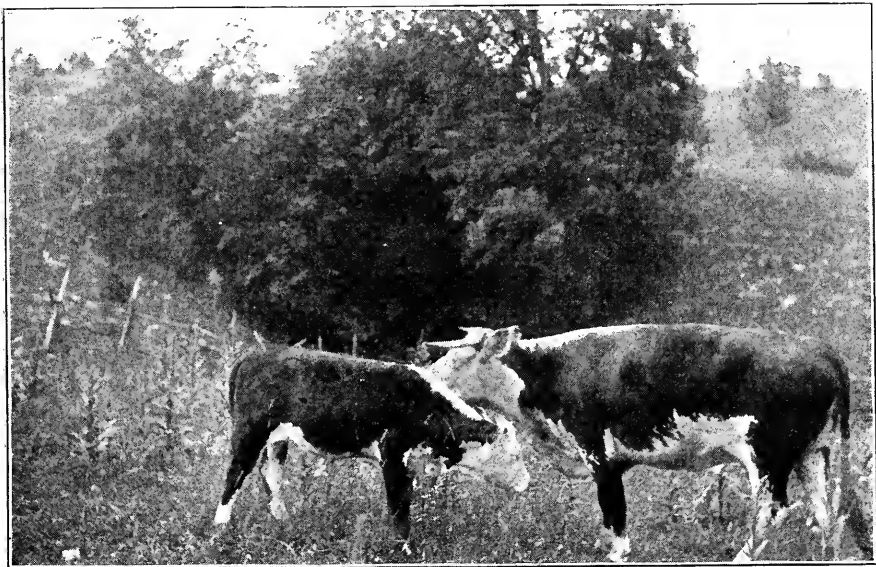
The Middle Valley has also its alternations of river bottom and bluegrass upland, and is generally productive of all the cereals and grasses, and is finely adapted to grape culture and market gardening. Thousands of dollars' worth

## **Agriculture**

of cabbages are raised in and shipped from this valley every year, forming one of the principal sources of revenue of the farmers of this section. The soil is finely adapted to the growing of vegetables of all kinds. On the broad, level farms of the Chilhowie and Seven Mile Ford country, hundreds of acres of potatoes are raised, in addition to the general farm crops.

The South Fork or Rye Valley is not as productive in general as the other valleys, but here are found many excellent farms, and the bottom lands of the St. Clair district are practically as fertile as those of the other valleys.

The whole of Smyth County is especially well adapted to apple growing, but the production of this crop has received comparatively little attention from the farmers of this section. Large quantities of apples, however, are shipped from the county every year, and it is certain that with proper attention the apple crop of the county could be made the chief source of profit to the farmers. The best results are obtained with Johnson's Fine Winter or York Imperial, Ben Davis and Black Ben, but the climate and soil are suited for the production of many other varieties. Almost every apple grown in the eastern states has been successfully grown in Smyth County. The fact is, that for stock-raising, grain, vegetable and fruit production, very few sections of the United States deserve stronger mention, especially when considered in connection with its healthfulness, water supply and water power.



A Morning Toilet—Lyon's Gap Stock Farm

Following is the number and assessed value of the live stock held respectively by the white and colored population of the county:

# **Rich Valley District**

<b>Agriculture</b>	<i>Horses and Mules.</i>		Assessed Value
	White	1,004	\$34,800.00
	Colored	14	500.00
<i>Cattle.</i>			
	White	4,642	67,235.00
	Colored	26	385.00
<i>Sheep.</i>			
	White	2,290	5,617.00
	Colored	3	10.00
<i>Hogs.</i>			
	White	1,523	2,253.00
	Colored	1	5.00

### Marion District

		Assessed Value	
<i>Horses and Mules.</i>			
White	1,314	\$49,661.00	<b>Agriculture</b>
Colored	13	335.00	
<i>Cattle.</i>			
White	3,610	39,692.00	
Colored	15	145.00	
<i>Sheep.</i>			
White	1,909	5,124.00	
<i>Hogs.</i>			
White	1,641	2,696.00	
Colored	1	5.00	

### St. Clair District

<i>Horses and Mules.</i>			
White	819	\$30,910.00	
Colored	2	80.00	



Home of George W. Tyler, Seven Mile Ford



# St. Clair District—Con.

		Assessed Value	Agriculture
<i>Cattle.</i>			
White	2,051	\$21,362.00	
Colored	8	85.00	
Sheep	1,305	2,322.00	
<i>Hogs.</i>			
White	1,599	2,394.00	
Colored	13	18.00	

## Total Live Stock in the County

Horses and Mules	3,166	\$116,286.00
Cattle	10,352	128,904.00
Sheep	5,507	13,073.00
Hogs	4,778	7,371.00
	<hr/> 23,803	<hr/> \$265,634.00

As is the case practically all over Virginia, the assessed valuation of property is approximately only one-third of actual values, so that the real market

## **Agriculture**

value of the live stock of the county is easily in the neighborhood of \$800,000.00.

In addition to the work of the farmers in raising cattle, horses, sheep and hogs, and in pure agriculture, the poultry business is assuming considerable proportions. As an instance, one produce firm in the county shipped last year over three hundred thousand dozen eggs and thousands of chickens, turkeys, geese and ducks. The nearness of the county to good markets renders this business one of the most profitable to the farmers. The Southwestern State Hospital at Marion especially maintains a large establishment for the production of chickens and eggs and has some of the finest flocks of thoroughbred chickens in America. With the exception of sales from its thoroughbred pens, however, the output is consumed at the hospital.

There are also several other yards in the county for the breeding of fine poultry.

The farmers of Smyth County are in better condition financially than ever before in the history of the county. The majority are free from embarrassing debts and the extension of the rural delivery system and the improvements in educational lines, as well as the marked growth of manufacturing and financial interests, have brought proportionate benefits to the agricultural population. The values of farming lands have increased along with the general rise in real estate values during the past few years, the prices in Smyth County ranging from ten to one hundred dollars per acre.



Rich Valley Saddle Horses in the Making

## Minerals

Minerals of great value abound. Smyth County, perhaps alone of all the counties of Virginia, contains within its borders practically every mineral found in commercial quantities in the State. Besides salt, gypsum, lead and barytes, several varieties of iron ore, manganese and marble are found. In Currin Valley, southeast of Marion, considerable quantities of iron ore have been mined and shipped. The iron ore found here is of good quality and the developments already made warrant the belief that this field will yield a very large amount of ore. Red hematite is found in quantity at Tilson's in Rich Valley, and in many places along the river below this point the surface indications warrant the belief that much iron ore exists. Near Atkins, six miles east of Marion, are thousands of acres of valuable ore land. Some of this property has been developed in past years with encouraging results. Both iron and manganese are found in this vicinity.

Rye Valley, which is a continuation of the great Cripple Creek Valley, is exceedingly rich in the abundance and variety of its mineral resources. In the east end the Lobdell Carwheel Company operated for many years a cold blast charcoal furnace, the entire product of the furnace being consumed at their carwheel works in Delaware. The iron ore is chiefly limonite and of excellent quality. The ore is found both as a wash ore and in large continuous veins. These ores show a range of from forty-two to sixty-five per cent. metallic iron and are remarkably free from objectionable properties. Several hundred tons

of manganese has been mined and shipped from this valley, and the deposits of manganese here and elsewhere in the county are apparently large and valuable.

Lead and zinc ores are found in many places in Smyth County. Zinc ores are found in Rye Valley at many points, while lead has been found in the same valley and also in Rich Valley and in the south spurs of Walker's Mountain. Several years ago a discovery of high-grade galena ore was made in Rye Valley, which resulted in the purchase of nineteen acres of land by the Rye Valley Lead Company. This company sunk a shaft one hundred feet in depth, uncovering a vein of ore from four to fourteen inches in thickness. Seventeen tons of this ore were hauled by wagon to Marion, the Marion and Rye Valley Railroad not then having been built, and shipped to New York for smelting. The carload netted about six hundred dollars. During the past year the Chamberlin Mineral Company has purchased about ninety acres of land in this vicinity, and the mineral rights on two hundred and fifty acres, at a cost of nineteen thousand dollars. The company is spending about fifteen thousand dollars for machinery and will begin at once the development of the property. Experts have estimated the ore already excavated at one hundred thousand dollars, with excellent prospects for the future. Some of the ore here has analyzed fifty-five per cent. lead, twelve and one-half per cent. zinc, four per cent. silver and two per cent gold.



Sheep in the Rye Valley

The ore deposits of the Rye Valley region are conveniently located with respect to the Marion & Rye Valley Railroad and indications are that ore properties here will be rapidly developed.

Clays that stand many of the ordinary fire tests are found in nearly every portion of the county. Before the Civil War the several iron forges that were then in operation in the county were successfully lined with these clays. There is abundant clay for the manufacture of building and paving brick. At Chilhowie for many years the Virginia Vitrified Brick and Paving Company, and afterwards the Southern Clay Manufacturing Company, operated an extensive plant for the manufacture of brick. Many of the towns of Virginia are paved with these brick. This company will, in all probability, resume operations in the near future.

The gypsum deposits of Virginia are confined to Smyth County, and in this county to a narrow strip in the valley of the North Fork of the Holston River. The deposit is more irregular in its mode of occurrence than is common for gypsum, and for this reason its exact extent is difficult to determine. For a distance of ten miles above Saltville there is more or less gypsum in the river valley, but only careful prospecting with a core drill can determine the amount of available gypsum. A great many pits have been opened from which gypsum has been taken for the purpose of making land plaster. This is especially the case in the districts known as the Pierson Plaster Bank Farm, the Barnes-

## Minerals

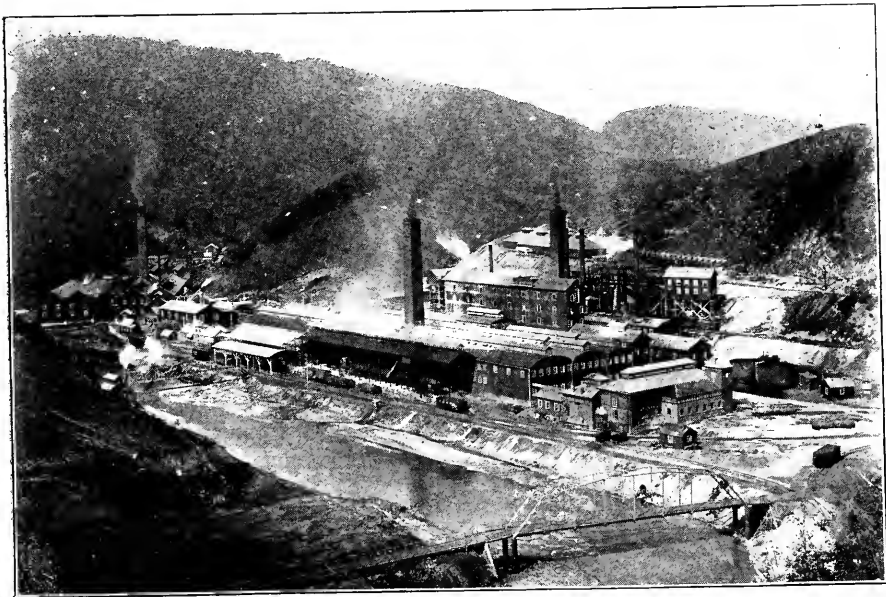
Taylor land, and the Cove region, which are three, nine, and thirteen miles, respectively, from Saltville.

The quality of the gypsum of Smyth County is excellent. Hundreds of tons of absolutely pure material may be obtained, while the average run of mine may be counted on as ninety-nine per cent. pure. Its physical characteristics also add to its value. It is soft, granular, and easily crushed. In color it is gray or white, while not infrequently it occurs in banded masses, the gray and white alternating.

The Buena Vista Plaster and Mining Company has operated successfully for many years a small mill a mile below Saltville and its output has been favorably received by the building trade. During the past year the Southern Gypsum Company, Incorporated, has bought the Pierson Plaster Bank Farm, three miles above Saltville and has carefully prospected a portion of this farm with a core drill. The gypsum underlying this land has a thickness at many places of about fifty feet and the prospecting completed by March, 1907, had proved the presence of a million and a half tons of gypsum. This company is now erecting at Plasterburg, in Smyth County, a large and expensive plant for the manufacture of gypsum into commercial forms. The most important use to which Virginia gypsum will be put is the making of high-grade wall plaster, though a considerable amount is used in the manufacture of Portland cement.

At Saltville, on a branch of the Norfolk & Western Railroad, there are





Plant of the Mathieson Alkali Works, Saltville

large deposits of salt, the property of the Mathieson Alkali Works, a corporation organized under the laws of the State of Virginia for the manufacture of salt, alkali, and caustic soda. The charter was granted and the company organized in 1893. The process used is that known as the Ammonia or Solvay, which was developed and first made a practical working success by Ernest Solvay, of Liege, Belgium, and is almost exclusively used by all manufacturers of alkali throughout the world. At the present time the Mathieson Alkali Works are not manufacturing salt, having closed down this portion of the operation about three years ago. The manufacture of salt, however, will probably be resumed on an extensive scale in the near future. Their particular product is and has been from the start, Sodium Carbonate, commercially known as "Soda Ash." This product is made in large quantities and in all of the different tests known to the trade. They also manufacture caustic soda and bi-carbonate of soda, the former in strengths known as 60, 70, 74, and 76.

The first product turned out of the plant was in June, 1895; three years later, in June, 1898, the company began the manufacture of bi-carbonate or cooking soda. This product has been of superior merit from the start, and because of this fact a large and growing trade has been acquired.

The company operates its own limestone quarry, which is located about three miles from the plant, the stone being conveyed from the quarry by means of an aerial tramway. Employment is given to more than twelve hundred men.

The Mathieson Alkali Works, through their ownership of the Castner Electrolytic Alkali Company, of Niagara Falls, New York, are the largest manufacturers of bleaching powder in the United States. They are also the only large manufacturers of chemically pure caustic soda, which is produced in large quantities at the Niagara plant, in connection with the manufacture of bleaching powder. The officials of the company are Jas. M. Edwards, 33 Wall Street, New York City, President; Edward E. Arnold and John R. Gladding, of 53 Canal Street, Providence, Rhode Island, Vice-President and Treasurer, respectively; and J. S. Goetchius, of Saltville, Virginia, Assistant Treasurer. W. D. Mount, of Saltville, Virginia, is General Superintendent of the plant. All products are handled through the firm of Messrs. Arnold, Hoffman & Company, who have offices in New York, Boston, Providence, and Philadelphia.

In addition to the minerals already mentioned, a large amount of limestone is quarried in Smyth County, for use at Saltville and in iron furnaces in Southwest Virginia. As already stated, the Mathieson Alkali Works maintains its own quarry for this product, and Mr. W. F. Culbert has operated two large quarries near Marion for several years, shipping annually about seventy-five thousand tons of limestone for use in the manufacture of iron. This stone is of first-class quality and suitable for the making of Portland cement.





A View at Saltville

The lumber business of Smyth County is easily one of the leading industries of Southwest Virginia, bringing to the county annually many thousands of dollars, and furnishing profitable employment to both skilled and unskilled labor. At Atkins, in the middle valley, the Glade Mountain Lumber Company have a band mill with a daily capacity of thirty-five thousand feet of lumber. This company owns the timber on about ten thousand acres of land and ship annually over the Norfolk & Western, to which they have a branch road about ten miles long, a large quantity of oak, chestnut, hemlock, and other varieties of lumber. C. A. Randolph is President of the company and Frank E. Highley, Secretary and Treasurer.

At Marion is located the double band mill of the United States Lumber Company, which has a capacity of one hundred thousand feet daily. This Company, which is capitalized at \$900,000.00, owns the timber on about forty thousand acres in what is said to be the finest body of spruce timber in the United States. The logs are brought to Marion over the Marion & Rye Valley Railroad, which is practically owned by the same company. In addition to their daily output of all grades of spruce lumber, the company produces also a large amount of ash, cherry, poplar, hemlock and basswood lumber. Their product goes mainly to points in eastern Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, and other eastern markets. Shipments are made as far west as Wisconsin, while a considerable quantity is exported to South America. The officers of the company

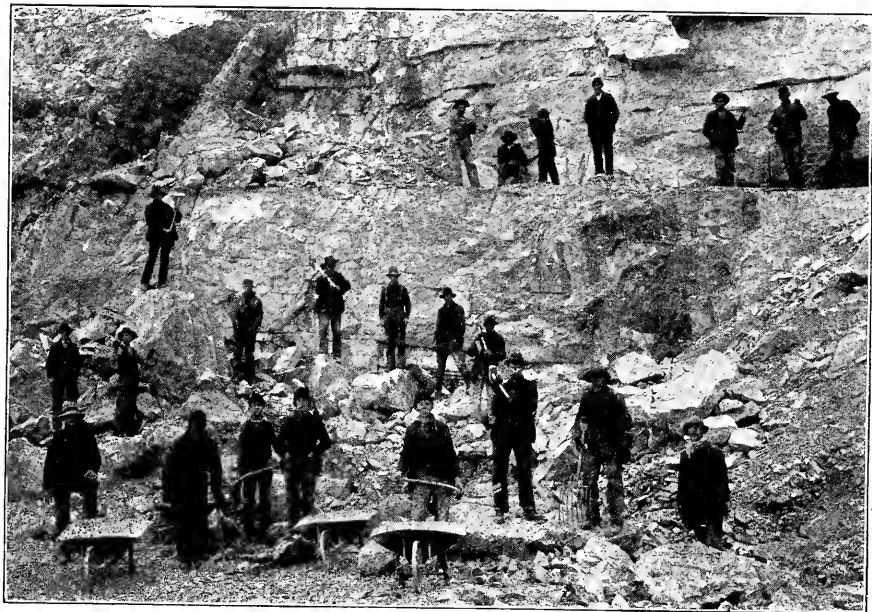
**Timber and Lumber** are J. C. Campbell, President, Marion, Virginia; J. C. Bradshaw, Secretary and Treasurer, Marion, Virginia, and C. W. Amsler, Vice-President, Clarion, Pennsylvania.

The Fairwood Lumber Company, whose mill is located at Fairwood, in Grayson County, is also controlled in part by stockholders in the United States Lumber Company, and owns the timber on nineteen thousand acres, most of which boundary is located in Smyth County. The product of the Fairwood mill comes to the Norfolk & Western at Marion by way of the Virginia Southern and Marion & Rye Valley Railroads.

At Chilhowie, in the middle valley, Mr. L. M. Bonham conducts a thriving lumber business, dealing in large quantities of the various kinds of lumber native to this section. The firm of Look & Lincoln, of Marion, also operate mills at different points in the county, producing lumber for their wagon and plow handle factory and for the general market.

The firm of D. H. Mitchell & Company, in addition to a general produce business, handle annually thousands of railroad ties, as well as considerable quantities of tan bark and lumber. In addition to these firms, there are smaller concerns throughout the county, both for the production and handling of marketable lumber.





Rock Quarry, near Marion

## **Other Manufacturing Interests**

The agricultural, timber and mineral resources of Smyth County, with its excellent water power and railroad facilities, make it an ideal location for the successful operation of all sorts of manufacturing enterprises. In each of the three valleys there are first-class roller mills for the production of flour and its allied products. While the mills of the Rye Valley and Rich Valley districts grind only for the local trade, there are located in the Middle Valley on the Norfolk and Western several mills of considerable size whose output finds a ready sale both locally and at various points in Virginia and neighboring states. At Mt. Carmel in this Valley, the firm of W. S. Stone & Company grinds a large amount of flour, meal, chop and mill-feed. At Marion the H. B. Staley Company has a brick milling establishment of considerable size operated by water power from the Holston River. This firm makes a specialty of fine Virginia flour, breakfast food and self-rising buckwheat flour, in addition to the general roller mill products. Shipments are made to various points in Virginia and other states, some of their products going as far south as Atlanta. At Chilhowie is the mill of the Chilhowie Milling Company, manufacturers of Our Pride, Purity, and Peerless Flour, meal, feedstuffs, etc., who supply many of the merchants of this and other sections, as well as the local trade. The officers of the company are James D. Tate, President; James H. Greever, Vice-President; B. T. Wren, Secretary.

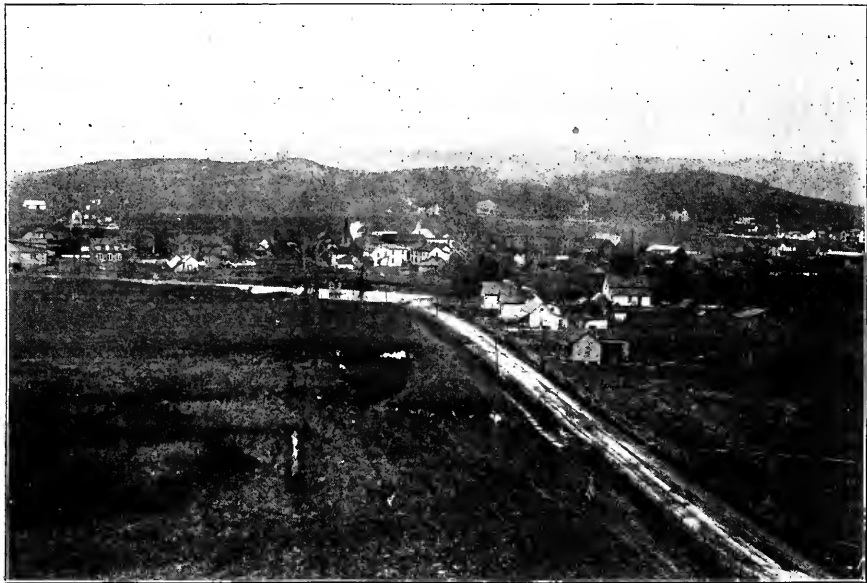
At Marion is the establishment of Look & Lincoln, one of the oldest



manufacturing concerns in Virginia. This firm manufactures annually from three to four hundred wagons, numbers of railroad and transfer carts, as well as various wagon parts and fixtures, and makes a specialty of the production of plow-handles, in the manufacture of which it is the pioneer factory of this section, having been established in 1860. Its product goes to all parts of the United States and shipments are made to foreign points. The officers of the company are N. L. Look, President; C. C. Lincoln, Vice-President; A. T. Lincoln, Secretary and Treasurer, and W. L. Lincoln, Superintendent.

Three miles from Marion, on the Marion & Rye Valley Railroad, is the prosperous village of Attoway, where Mr. Geo. M. Atkins operates a factory for the manufacture of handles, hubs, and other material. Here also is supplied a considerable quantity of walnut and other fine woods, some of which is shipped to European markets.

The Marion Manufacturing and Milling Company have successfully operated a foundry and repair establishment at Marion for several years, manufacturing castings of all kinds, wagons and wagon material. This firm has recently secured a new charter under the name of the Marion Foundry and Machine Works, with an additional capital of \$30,000.00. Their equipment has recently been enlarged and fitted for all kinds of railroad and machine repair work. The officers are B. F. Buchanan, President; Dr. John S. Apperson, Secretary and Treasurer, and Thos. W. Lumsden, General Manager.



Part of the Town of Chilhowie

The Virginia Table Works, recently incorporated, with a capital stock of \$30,000.00, is now erecting at Marion and will have in operation early this summer a modern table factory, which is being constructed of brick and reinforced concrete, and will be operated by electric power from the plant of the Marion Electric Light and Power Company on the Holston River, three miles west of Marion, from which the town of Marion is now supplied with electric lights. The officers of the Virginia Table Works are W. L. Lincoln, President; B. F. Buchanan, Vice-President, and L. P. Collins, Secretary and Treasurer.

The firm of W. C. Seaver & Sons, long established manufacturers of this section, are operating at Marion a well-equipped factory for the manufacture of various kinds of household furniture, their product going to Boston and other Northern markets. Their establishment is supplied with modern machinery and gives employment to both skilled and unskilled labor. Their output has been most favorably received by furniture dealers, and their production and ready sale of this product gives promise for the rapid future growth of the furniture business in this section.

The Marion Lumber and Contracting Company conducts a factory for the manufacture of flooring, inside finishing material and building supplies of all kinds, for which there is an unusual demand in the county at this time.

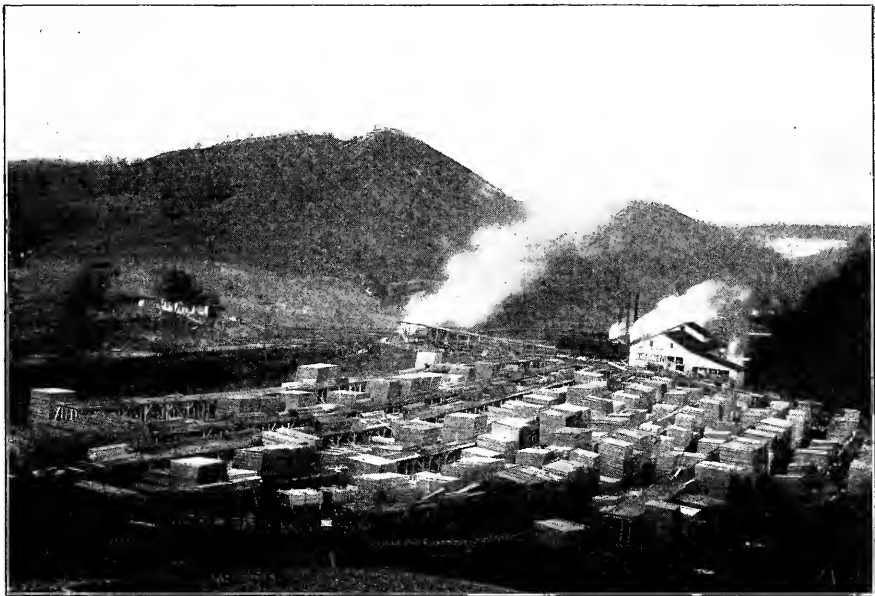
Chilhowie, which is located in one of the most prosperous sections of the county, with a wide area of level territory surrounding it, is advantageously

## **Other Manufacturing Interests**

located for manufacturing industries, and here, in addition to the industries already mentioned, there are in operation an overall factory, a sash, door and blind factory, a large planing mill and other successful establishments. It is one of the leading business localities in the county.

At Seven Mile Ford, one of the important railroad points of the county, there has recently been organized a company for the manufacture of building brick, there being an abundance of brick clay in this region. Here also is contemplated the early erection of an electric light and power plant which will supply light and power from the Holston River to the Seven Mile Ford country and the town of Chilhowie.

The successful operation of the various manufacturing enterprises now in existence in Smyth County is but an indication of the large possibilities of this field. The opening here is good for the investment of capital in almost any manufacturing industry suited to the resources and situation of the county. The situation is especially advantageous for the establishment of factories for the manufacture of all grades of furniture, and for boxes, building material, and other wood products. There is an abundance of chestnut and other woods for the successful operation of a large extract plant. The county and section need here a brick factory, an ice plant, an iron furnace, a steam laundry, a bakery and other enterprises. That the people of the county have confidence in its abundant resources and prospects is shown by the fact that outside of the two large



Plant of the United States Lumber Co., Marion

band mills and the plant of the Mathieson Alkali Works, practically every enterprise in the county is financed by local capital.



**Courts** Smyth County is situated in the twenty-third judicial circuit of Virginia, over which Judge F. B. Hutton, of Abingdon, presides. There are five terms of the circuit court: February, April, August, October and December. Twenty-eight miles east of Marion, at Wytheville, the Supreme Court of Virginia holds annual sessions on the tenth of June. Twenty-eight miles west, at Abingdon, the United States Court is held.



**County Officers** Clerk, S. W. Kent, Marion, Va.; Treasurer, George W. Wright, Marion, Va.; Sheriff, W. N. McGhee, Seven Mile Ford, Va.; Commonwealth's Attorney, Robert L. Williams, Marion, Va.; Superintendent of Schools, B. E. Copenhaver, Marion, Va.

*Board of Supervisors:*—Rich Valley District, T. B. Ward, Chatham Hill, Va., Marion District, D. C. Gollehon, Seven Mile Ford, Va., St. Clair District, J. F. Scott, Sugar Grove, Va.

Marion, Population, 2,700.....Mayor, John P. Sheffey. **Incorporated**  
 Saltville, Population, 1,300.....Mayor, T. B. Hobbs. **Towns**



*Advertising Committee:*—John P. Sheffey, Marion, Va., Chairman. B. F. Buchanan, Marion, Va., R. A. Anderson, Marion, Va., Dr. John S. Apperson, Marion, Va., B. E. Copenhaver, Marion, Va. **Exposition Committees, 1907**



*Rich Valley District:*—J. S. Goetchius, Saltville, Va., Dr. J. D. Buchanan, Ellendale, Va., J. S. Roberts, Broadford, Va., T. B. Ward, Chatham Hill, Va., W. V. B. Tilson, Chatham Hill, Va. **General Exposition Committees**

*Marion District:*—H. P. Copenhaver, Marion, Va., D. C. Gollehon, Seven Mile Ford, Va., L. M. Pugh, Sugar Grove, Va., James F. Scott, Sugar Grove, Va., E. S. Neff, Seven Mile Ford, Va.

*St. Clair District:*—Maurice Hale, Sugar Grove, Va., D. R. Maiden, Seven Mile Ford, Va., L. M. Pugh, Sugar Grove, Va., Jas. F. Scott, Sugar Grove, Va., E. S. Neff, Seven Mile Ford, Va.



Wagon Factory of Look & Lincoln Marion



*Lumber and Timber:*—J. C. Campbell, Chairman, Marion, Va., M. M. Seaver, Marion, Va., C. C. Lincoln, Marion, Va., W. J. Matson, Marion, Va., C. A. Randolph, Atkins, Va., H. L. Bonham, Chilhowie, Va.

**General  
Exposition  
Committee**

*Minerals:*—Dr. John S. Apperson, Chairman, Marion, Va., A. T. Short, Marion, Va., F. A. Wilder, Broadford, Va., W. D. Mount, Saltville, Va., R. N. Ward, Sugar Grove, Va., J. H. Wissler, Cedar Springs, Va., W. F. Culbert, Marion, Va.

Any of the gentlemen of these committees will be glad at any time to furnish further information in regard to their respective sections, or general and special inquiries may be directed to George W. Richardson, Secretary of the Board of Trade, Marion, Smyth County, Virginia.

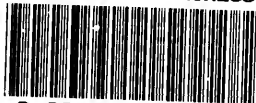
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